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by
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2019

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Blast Radius

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Blast Radius

by

Isaac Burns

Report

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Abstract

Blast Radius

Isaac Artin Burns, MFA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

Supervisor: Andrew Shea

Abstract: This report summarizes the creation of *Blast Radius*, a short fiction film. It covers the writing process, pre-production, production, and post-production. *Blast Radius* was produced as a graduate thesis film in partial fulfillment of a Master of Fine Arts degree in Film and Media Production in the Department of Radio-Television-Film

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DEVELOPMENT

In the early afternoon of January 13, 2018, I was scrolling through twitter at my house when I saw posts about a missile heading towards Hawaii. I searched for more information and worried about what war under Trump would look like. After about fifteen minutes of petrified scrolling, I saw it was a false alarm. I was relieved. It was scary enough three thousand miles away, I couldn't imagine what it would have been like living in Hawaii.

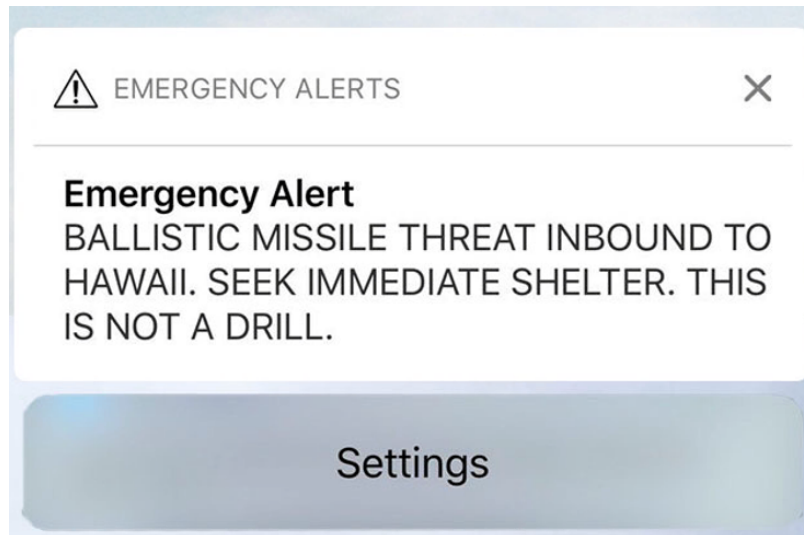


Figure 01: the emergency cell phone alert pushed to everyone in Hawaii

In February, Don Howard asked my cohort to pitch ideas for our theses. I talked about the alert, the trauma of living through that, and how I might react if I lived there. At the time, the aftermath of the false alarm interested me most. What if you and your family react differently? What if you make the wrong decision? What if your actions appall you in retrospect? I don't view myself as a writer-director, despite the fact that I wrote all of my fiction projects at UT. I wrote in order to direct a film, not because I loved screenwriting. The potential directions to take the story were overwhelming.

To help make sense of the directions, I asked Dan Caffrey to co-write the screenplay. Dan and I met in Deb Lewis's Cinema Laboratory class, in which we collaborated on several projects. Unlike me, Dan loves writing and hoped to hone his screenwriting abilities while he pursued his MFA in playwriting. We outlined a rough story together, sketching out Ellen, Abe, and Galen. With our characters sketched in place, it was time to write.

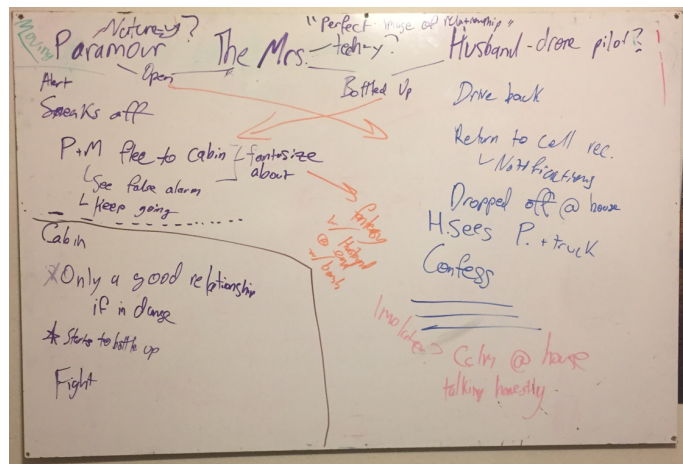


Figure 02. Our initial scribbled outline

WRITING

Writing proved the most challenging part of the process, not because of collaborating with Dan but because of what I imposed on the project. I fixated on splitting the film in half with the first half centered around the missile alert and the second half centered around the aftermath. In our early drafts, we had Ellen choose to ride out the missile with her paramour Galen instead of her husband Abe, who was a drone pilot. These early drafts also had undefined and apathetic versions of Ellen and Abe. We also put too much dialogue and a clunky structure. Andrew Shea called it, “overly clever.” The early drafts were very rough.

After a few drafts without progress, I thought back to what made my previous film, *Clean Break*, take shape. The moment I started thinking deeply about the characters, the story leaped forward. Once I defined the characters with backstory, a spine, and objectives, the story blossomed. I made my characters active. Once I realized that, I understood what Andrew Shea meant with his feedback to make the characters active, and make them deal with the situation and each other. In order to get to that place, I had to discover more about my characters. Our biggest leap forward in the writing process happened when we focused on Ellen, Abe, and my personal ties to the story.

Before our breakthrough with the script, I did a deep clean of my apartment. I threw out almost everything except a collection of things from my last relationship. I didn’t throw out the books she got me, the postcards, the cactus, the small paperclip she put on my jacket’s zipper. I could have thrown them out, but I didn’t want to. I boxed up the collection and slid it under my bed.

When I wrote the next draft, I thought about that box and what it meant for me. I also worried about what it would look like if someone found it. They might think I wasn’t over the relationship, especially since my ex and I stay in touch. I incorporated those

worries into the screenplay along with advice from Andrew Shea and Cindy McCreery to focus on the missile alert itself and how it would test Ellen and Abe's relationship. To focus on the relationship between Ellen and Abe, Dan and I moved Galen from a supporting character to Ellen's ex-fiancé, symbolized by a box of memorabilia and engagement ring. To make the box easily findable in the context of the story, we made them a newly moved in couple, freshly engaged. If they hadn't finished moving in, their belongings would be jumbled. Abe could believably find the box while looking for survival materials and give him an opportunity to act.



Figure 03. My lumpy cactus from a past relationship

As Dan and I wrote this version, it was like the characters wrote their story while we transcribed it to the page. With my emotional ties to the story, Ellen and Abe became well-defined, had clear goals, and grew in conflict as a result of their actions. From here, Dan punched it up and added comedic beats to intersperse into the intense drama. With the script in working order, I felt ready to start casting.

CASTING

I find casting generally stressful. The varied interpretations of the roles, scheduling headaches, and endless repetitions of the same lines are mind-numbing. At the end of our first day of twenty auditions, Emily Trent auditioned. Her reading and point of view about the character and the story brought her to the top of my list. Additionally, Emily was enrolled in Laurel Vouvray's Advanced Meisner acting class in Austin. Eman Esfandi, who acted in *Clean Break*, was also a student of Laurel's and took that acting class. Additionally, Meisner's acting technique is the only one I had studied until that point, thanks to Andrew Shea's Advanced Directing class. Based on our shared Meisner foundation and her perspective, I felt confident casting Emily.

While casting Abe, none of the actors that auditioned stood out. However, the following weekend, I met Isaac Garza through Eman at the Austin Film Festival. The three of us shared a screening block in which *Clean Break* screened alongside Eman's film *Pepito*, which Isaac wrote and acted in. Additionally, Isaac also took Laurel's Meisner class. After AFF, I asked Isaac if he'd be interested in the role. I auditioned him with Emily a week later. Based on their chemistry and our shared foundation in Meisner, I officially cast them as Ellen and Abe.



Figure 04. Isaac Garza, Emily Trent, and me after wrapping production

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals began in November. I met with Emily and Isaac separately to talk about the characters, the script, and tone. When meeting with Isaac, he said something that stayed with me through the rest of production: “the best dramas are really funny.” I thought back to movies I had drawn on during the writing process. These included *Phantom Thread*, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, and *First Reformed*. All are dramas, but all have a sense of humor. The comedic moments come from the main characters being brutally honest and sometimes petty or mean to each other. In *Phantom Thread*, Alma’s and Reynolds’ shared refusal to abandon their goals drive their actions and conflict. Alma cooks Reynolds a surprise dinner she knows he will dislike in order to see if he will lie to her. This starts a bitter, impassioned fight between them. Reynolds snaps at Alma, asking if she’s, “A special agent sent here to ruin my evening and possibly my entire life?”. The characters weaponize the intimacy of their relationships to hurt each other. Their sincerity mixed with how strongly they feel about their situations draws out the comedy.

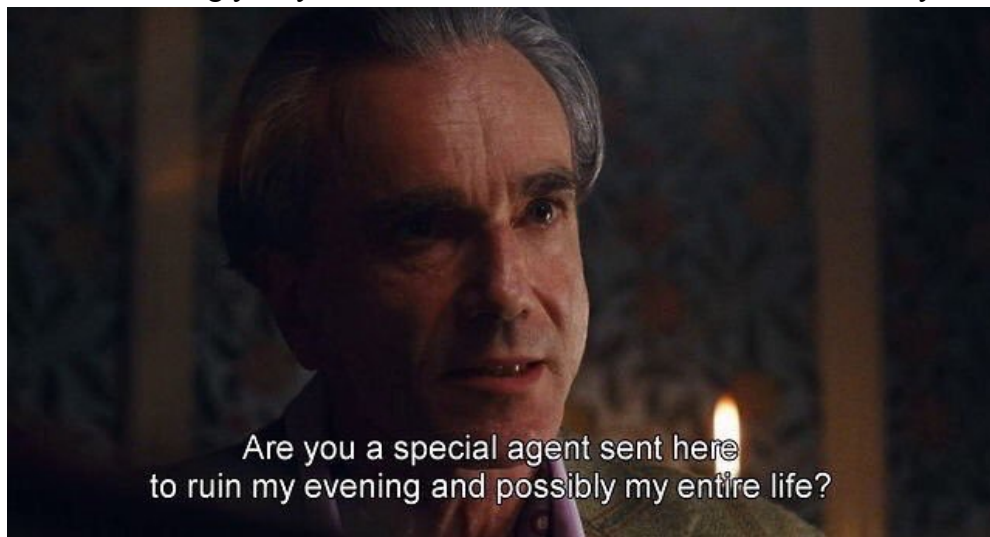


Figure 05. Reynolds complaining to Alma in Phantom Thread

Another influence was Alex Ross Perry's *Queen of Earth*, which follows a close friendship ripping apart. In an interview with The Playlist in 2015, Perry said, "When someone's at their lowest point, they're not worried about being proper and being dignified and being heroes, they're just worried about getting through the day." I wanted to explore this with both characters. In rehearsals, I talked with Isaac about how for Abe, the discovery of the box and engagement ring is worse than the incoming missile, and likely the worst day in his life. For him, this is a huge betrayal of trust in the relationship. For Ellen, this reveals an unknown, vindictive side of him. With *Blast Radius*, I wanted to combine this component of *Queen of Earth* with Ellen's and Abe's impassioned, comedic fighting in their lowest moments. With these ideas in mind, we were ready to move out of rehearsals and into production.

LOCATION

The most stressful part of pre-production was finding the right house to film in. The film is almost exclusively interiors and must be believable as a Hawaiian interior. Additionally, given that the characters are newly moved-in, the interiors had to be minimally decorated, but with enough depth and variety to make bare walls visually interesting. The location search took time, with a several prospects falling through. By mid-December and our production days less than a month out, I found a newly available listing on Air BnB. The house had comfortable dimensions, plenty of room for a crew and equipment, and lots of natural light. We contacted the owner, who thankfully was more than accommodating and allowed us to shoot in the location.

When I arrived with the production designer, Christiane Escobar, to scout the location, we were pleased to discover a wall of bamboo along one side of the house, which would help sell that the film takes place in Hawaii. There were minimal furnishings as well, which made production design for a couple unpacking in a new house straightforward. With the location and cast locked, I finally felt ready to lock our crew and figure out our shooting strategy.



Figures 6 & 7. Interiors at the location

CREWING

In my time at UT Austin, I've grown increasingly aware about the lack of diversity in both film and higher education. I'm a straight, white, cisgender filmmaker from a middle-class upbringing. That demographic is over-represented in the film industry, both in front of and behind the camera. I wanted my filmmaking in this program to provide those from under-represented and diverse backgrounds with an opportunity to learn and gain experience on larger film productions. This semester, I found Mira Lippold-Johnson's production philosophy, which articulated my sentiments towards crewing better than I ever could. Her production philosophy is:

We choose to value the experience of our creative partners over the impossible goal of a perfect shoot. Flexibility, generosity, and gratitude are valued by all crew members. Department heads and experienced filmmakers commit to teaching and encouraging the less-experienced members of our team. A production is successful only if everyone is glad to have been a part of it.

While I found Mira's philosophy this semester, my producer Ahsjah Exumé held the same values for finding the rest of our crew. As we headed into January, we built out our crew position by position until January 13th, when we went into production with a diverse, less-experienced, yet eager crew.

VISUAL STRATEGY

I knew from the outset that I wanted Rajinee Buquing to be *Blast Radius*' director of photography. Our first collaboration was on *Clean Break*, which was one of Rajinee's first times shooting a larger-scale production. She was a junior in RTF when we made *Clean Break*, so at the time she had limited production experience. Despite her lack of experience, I saw drive, dedication, and a great visual sensibility in her personal work. She brought all of that to *Clean Break* and became an integral voice in the final product. *Blast Radius* marks our second collaboration.



Figure 8. Still from *Le Mepris* by Jean-Luc Godard

Rajinee and I developed *Blast Radius*' visual strategy. We drew from the middle third of Jean-Luc Godard's film *Le Mepris*, which takes place exclusively in an apartment. Godard and cinematographer Raoul Coutard exploit the architecture of the apartment to isolate their characters. Their characters shout across rooms and down hallways, isolated by door frames and halls. Shooting in a scope aspect ratio of 2.35:1 enhances their separation with its extra wide frame.

Additionally, I wanted to work with zooms and dolly moves, which I hadn't worked with since my KB film *Stevie Gets A Fake ID*. With *Stevie*, I prioritized the formal parts of filmmaking instead of the story, characters, and performances. I had complicated dolly shots, lighting gags, and ambitious sound design with a rough draft of

a script. The cast (Austin Hille, Denise Garza, and Sarah Maggard) brought much more to their roles than I had given them. In a rehearsal with Austin, he asked me basic questions about the character. I had answers to none of them because I was so focused on how I would put the whole film together.

Not wanting to make the same mistake with *Clean Break*, I feel like I over-corrected. I prioritized the story, characters, and performances over the formal aspects of the film. I was so focused on performances that I limited how we told the story. I kept things minimal without any semi-complicated setups and lighting. With *Blast Radius*, I finally felt ready to combine everything, making room for motivated dolly moves alongside simpler setups to focus on performance in specific moments.

We used a stable camera in the first scene, creating a calm environment. As chaos from the missile alert grew, we began moving the camera with a dolly. Finally, when Abe finds Ellen's box, we switched to handheld, where we remained for the rest of the film. In the film's final scene, we returned to our stable camera on a tripod.

PRODUCTION

On January 11, we picked up equipment from Equipment Checkout. The next day, we moved into our location, and on Sunday, January 13, 2019, the one-year anniversary of the missile alert in Hawaii, we began production. I worked with the assistant director Alex Rosales to schedule our shoot in order, which was a luxury afforded by our single location. This allowed us to easily adjust the script as we shot and keep track of revisions that we made on the fly.

I encouraged Emily and Isaac to improvise from the first day. Day one focused on the opening scene in which Ellen and Abe accidentally break the bed they made together. While there was good material in there, I had an inkling the scene wasn't working. After running a couple takes, I asked the script supervisor for runtimes on each take. They all approached 4 minutes, which was far too long for an opening. I realized I'd need to drastically cut the scene while editing. By the time lunch rolled around, we only had coverage the first part of the scene, which I would likely cut in the edit. This time wasn't all lost, it helped us warm up into production both for the crew and cast. We worked out the kinks and finished the rest of the day with a small amount of coverage.

The second day, I went zoom-crazy. Rajinee and I talked about using our zoom lens for one shot on the first day, which was our only planned zoom. I had a gut decision to shoot the bulk of our second day on our zoom lens. We tried different speeds from take to take, giving me lots of options while editing, but not a lot of room for consistent cross-cutting. I worried about the lack of consistency, but we didn't have the time to dwell on it. I had to roll with my gut that it would work.

This was also my first time shooting a conversation across rooms. For efficiency, we shot Isaac's scenes in the living room first, and Emily's in the bathroom second. The only major difference from shooting standard coverage of a conversation was that we

shot one half of multiple scenes first, changed rooms and lighting setups, then the other half of each scene. This was the only anomaly in shooting in script order.

The hardest day was the third day when we shot the big fight. Over the course of the day, our blocking evolved along with our camera positions and movement. Rajinee had the camera on an easy-rig, granting her stability and mobility to capture the action. Because of the shifting blocking, we had to rework the shots as we went. Thanks to Rajinee's experience filming nonfiction, she adjusted well to the chaotic shifts in performance and blocking. At the end of the day, Isaac, Emily, Ahsjah, and Alex were worried that the scene wouldn't cut together with our changing blocking, overlapping and improvised dialogue, and changing camera. Based on the quantity of coverage and takes I remembered, I felt like we had the scene. It was just a matter of editing it together. The last two days of the shoot went smoothly, we made all of our days and wrapped out on time on our final day.



Figure 09: Rajinee Buquing and Kenji Chong adjusting the camera

Casting the right actors is crucial to directing. If the actors aren't believable as their characters, the movie can fall apart instantly. Thankfully, both Emily and Isaac fully embodied their characters during production. I only had to give them minor adjustments while they explored the scenes as Ellen and Abe. Their knowledge of the characters allowed us to nail scenes with minimal takes. Generally, I don't like shooting many takes, I prefer to get longer takes that follow variations throughout a scene rather than several options for one or two moments in a scene. We averaged around four takes per shot, which gave enough variety without an overwhelming number of options.

I approached working during production differently than I had with all of my previous film. With my other films, I obsessed over production after leaving set. I watched dailies and stressed about the remainder of the shoot. Part of this stemmed from the idea that if you're not always working, you don't care enough about your work. In the fall, I over-extended myself, which negatively affected all parts of my life, from my academic work, to my film work, to my personal life. I did not want to repeat that.



Figure 10. The Blast Radius crew at wrap

Consequently, I treated each day like a day job. Once I left set, I stopped working. At the end of every day, I met briefly with department heads to go over the next day. After that meeting, I went home and made myself forget about set. I made dinner with friends, watched a movie, or played games with my roommates. I found this cleared my head and reduced stress, I was able to approach each day in a good mood rather than on edge and fried from lack of sleep. I could not have taken this approach if I didn't trust my crew and cast fully, which I felt comfortable doing. The crew held the production together, and I'm grateful for their energy and dedication to the film.

We wrapped production on time on January 17 and on January 18, we returned our equipment to checkout. Thanks to the fantastic crew, all 259 pieces of equipment and their components were returned in full working order. Later that day, I returned our U-Haul, set up an Avid project, imported media, synced and organized footage, and backed everything up. Then I didn't touch anything for ten days.

EDITING

On January 28, I began logging footage, working my way through each take scene by scene. Working with notes from Cameron Belcher, the script supervisor, I picked my favorite takes and worked through an assembly.

My instincts about the first scene were confirmed: it was way too long. The performances were good in each take; however, the scene had the same beat hit repeatedly. Looking back, if I had analyzed the script more with the actors, I might have picked up on the repeated beat. After struggling to cut together a tolerable assembly of the scene, I skipped the dull moments and plowed ahead.

The second half of the scene had limited coverage compared to the first half. The first part of the scene took up most of the shoot day, but the important part of the scene was shot at the end of the day with limited time. As a result, not every action was fully covered. For example, Abe lies down on the bed offscreen, which feels clunky. Foley made the moment feel better, but not by much. If I had planned the second part of that scene a little better, I might have the coverage needed to properly cover that moment. The scene works, but we could have done it more elegantly.



Figure 11. Blast Radius Scene 7

After struggling through the first scene, the next sequence edited itself. As Ellen and Abe yell across rooms, our zooms brought enough energy to negate the need cut within each scene. From rough cut to final cut, scenes 3 through 8 experienced the least changes, suffering only minimal tweaks.

As I suspected, Scene 10, the fight scene, proved the hardest to edit. I discovered that a few moments were only in one take (Abe telling Emily to pick up the phone when Galen calls and the close-up of Emily telling Abe that he means something to her in the corner). Additionally, our shifting blocking, overlapping dialogue, and loose camera directions added more difficulties to the mix. I opened up Walter Murch's *In the Blink of an Eye* for wisdom. Off the bat, he writes, "...editing - even on a 'normal' film - is not so much a putting together as it is a discovery of a path." That certainly applied here. I needed to take the time to discover the path of the scene. Relying on favorite takes would not be enough to guide editing the scene.



Figure 12. Emily yelling, "Fuck you!" at Isaac

Over the next two months, I tore down and re-built the scene from scratch several times. I discovered I found myself returning to a few of the same takes with each go. Once I found takes that worked best, I finessed them together and whittled down the scene until it felt right. The final version closely resembled the script with minimal

deviation, only three or four lines weren't in the script. Early versions had extended improvisation with Emily and Isaac riffing. While they were funny, they felt unnecessary to the scene and irrelevant to the film's themes. Emily yelling, "fuck you," after Isaac mocked her said lot more than a minute of their improvised insults.

Editing the rest of the film went smoothly, scenes didn't change drastically from the first assembly through the final cut. The only major change was the omission of the last scene. The last scene initially had Abe proposing to Ellen while she dried off the pictures from the box. A week before shooting, I changed it to Ellen proposing to Abe based on feedback from a few people that had read the script. In the first cut, the scene felt like an apology from Ellen when she had nothing to apologize for. I was faced with two options, find a different ending in the previous scene, or reshoot the scene. Our location had limited availability for a pickup, as did our actors. I looked through scene 16 and found what felt like a potential ending: Ellen and Abe embracing on the lawn right after they realize it was a false alarm. Another reason for ending here is that the final three minutes contain no dialogue. After ten minutes of heavy dialogue and fighting, Ellen and Abe shut up and accept each other.

The final piece of the visual edit arrived in March. During production, my friend Taniel Kilajian vacationed in Hawaii. Before he left, I gave him a super 8 camera and six rolls of film. My instructions were to shoot three things: typical Hawaii, non-typical Hawaii, and hands holding. Taniel shot all six rolls and the developed film came back in March. I picked my favorite moments, which I used to open and close the film. I chose super 8 this footage to lends authenticity to the film. It's inherent shaky, home-video quality establishes that we are truly in Hawaii as seen from a film camera. Additionally,

super 8 has a nostalgic quality to its footage. It allows the film to start off with a rosy and peaceful atmosphere, which gets shattered by the missile alert.



Figure 13. A frame of super 8 footage shot by Taniel Kilajian

SOUND DESIGN

After two months of editing and five cuts of the film, I arrived at picture lock on April 1. From here, I moved into sound design with Garrick Chui. Since the film takes place inside, we needed to create a believable outside world. Garrick and I met and spotted the film, figuring out where we needed sirens, ambience, and more. We found the right sounds or created them with foley with the help of Jahaira Acevedo. With our sounds ready to go, Evan Dunivan cleaned up the dialogue and mixed the sound.

Additionally, I did not want a score, instead relying exclusively on the sound design of the outside world. I think I score would diminish the impact of certain moments and prove redundant. I wanted a sound design grounded in reality and objective for the majority of the film. When Abe jumps on top of Ellen when he thinks the missile comes, we moved into a subjective space. We took out the higher frequencies and kept a trace of Emily's heartbeat from her lav mic. We added a low-frequency sound for added oomph. As they realize it was a false alarm, we faded back into objective sound design.

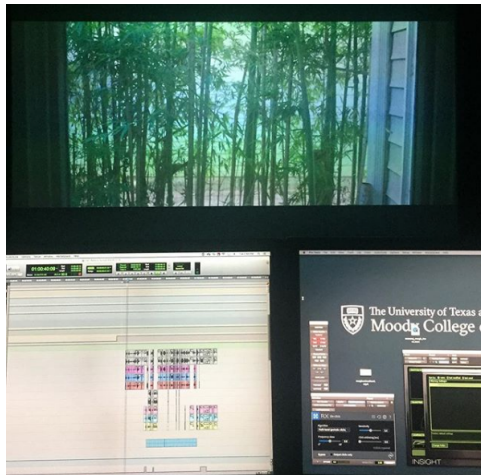


Figure 14. Printing the surround sound mix from Pro Tools.

MUSIC

While the film doesn't have a score, I licensed two songs to open and close the film. The opening song is "Leadlight" by Julia Jacklin and the second is "Walt's Fantasy" by Advance Base. Both share a similar meter in 6/8 or 3/4. "Leadlight" kicks off the film with its laid-back guitar and thematically relevant lyrics. Walt's Fantasy is instrumental and nostalgic, playing under the last moments and into super 8 footage and credits.

After Evan finished the sound mix, I did the color grade for the film. The most difficult parts were the first scene and the fight scene. Since we spent all day shooting those scenes, the light is inconsistent and the quality of the light changed throughout the day. Combined with blank white walls, getting the shots consistent was difficult. I went through thirteen color passes before arriving at an acceptable, consistent version. I tested it across several screens of varying quality and projectors looking for any glaring inconsistencies. Thankfully, nothing major stood out. The final steps were putting in credits, exporting, and quality checking everything together.

REFLECTIONS

It's funny looking back fourteen months and seeing how Blast Radius grew from my initial informal pitch into its final form. I think the final product is successful and I feel like it's the most accomplished film I've made so far. While it has flaws, I believe that overall, Blast Radius is a good short film about fully accepting a loved one. Blast Radius is also a nice addition to the series of relationship movies that I made in this program. My last three films follow fracturing relationships (sisters, best friends, an engaged couple) and the attempts to repair them or move beyond them. Writing this report, I thought about why I might be drawn to these stories. One reason might be that I have trouble being fully honest and open in my relationships. I like these stories because these characters articulate things I'm having trouble expressing. They all face the consequences of being too open with another person, which scares me in my day to day life. When I first toured UT, I had a meeting with Paul Stekler where he asked, "What kind of films do you want to make?" I didn't have an answer then, but I do now. I don't want to make a war movie, or a Marvel movie, or any other spectacle-driven film. I want to keep making smaller, character-driven films about faltering relationships.

Appendix 01: Production and post-production statistics

Production Days: 5

Total Setups: 71

Total Scenes: 19

Total Takes: 252

Total Pages shot: 14

Most setups in a day: 16 (day 2)

Most pages shot in a day: 4 7/8 (day 3)

Scene with the most setups: scene 2 (12)

Most takes: 9 (10J - last third of the big fight)

Longest Take: 4:40:23 (16DT2 - Abe drying the photos outside)

Most used Focal Length: 32mm

Items from Equipment Checkout: 259

Bed frames broken: 1

GBs of Raw Footage: 661.23

Total Time of Raw Footage: 6:27:10:19

Number of cuts: 5

Rough Cut Runtime: 17:20

Final runtime (w/ credits): 14:10

Shooting Ratio: 27:1

Appendix 02: Screenplay

Begins next page

BLAST RADIUS

Written by

Dan Caffrey & Isaac Burns

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INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A cozy house in suburban Honolulu. Half-unpacked moving boxes lie everywhere with "KITCHEN" and "CAMPING" and "ELLEN" and "ABE" scrawled across them.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A mattress lies vertical against the wall.

ELLEN and ABE, late 20s, build a bed together. A RADIO plays music in the corner.

Ellen sits in the middle of the frame lining up a screw. Abe holds the corner of the frame in place.

ELLEN
Stop moving it, I'm so close.

ABE
Just jam it in there.

ELLEN
I don't wanna fuck up the hole.

Abe reaches over and rips the screw out, shoving it into the hole. Mission accomplished.

ABE
See? Not that hard. Quarter inch
allen wrench, please.

Abe holds out his hand like a surgeon asking for a scalpel. Ellen places a wrench in his hand. Abe tries to tighten screw with it, but it won't fit. He looks at the wrench, then holds his hand back out.

ABE (CONT'D)
I said half-inch

ELLEN
You said quarter-inch.

ABE
I would've said quarter-inch if I
wanted quarter-inch.

Ellen gets up takes the wrench from Abe's hand. She spies the wrench on the other side of the room.

She crosses the room and grabs the half-inch wrench, tossing at Abe. It hits him square in the back.

ELLEN
That half-inch enough for you?

ABE
It is, actually, I could feel all
of it digging into my back.

Ellen watches Abe tighten up the screw.

ELLEN
Did I hurt you?

ABE
Just spiritually.

Ellen laughs.

Abe grabs a nearby HAMMER and whacks the bed frame.

ABE (CONT'D)
Voila.

Ellen walks to the corner and lays out a roll of SLATS.

ELLEN
Grab the other end.

Abe does and together, they spread them over the frame.

They grab the mattress and plop it down on the frame. They
step back to admire their handiwork.

ABE
We did it.

ELLEN
We survided.

They flop onto the bed and smile at each other. After a
moment. The bed collapses, legs splayed out.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Dammit Abe!

ABE
It's not my fault it busted.

ELLEN
Maybe if you let me do it we'd have
a nice working bed frame.

ABE
Well you-

A loud ALERT rings out from the radio.

RADIO

The US Pacific Command has detected a missile threat to Hawaii. A missile may impact on land or sea within minutes. This is not a drill. If you are indoors, stay indoors. If you are outdoors, seek immediate shelter. Remain indoors away from windows. This is not a drill.

They pull out their phones to find an emergency alert reading "EMERGENCY ALERT: MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER"

ELLEN

This can't be real.

EXT. BACK PORCH

Abe and Ellen stand looking up at the sky.

ELLEN

I don't hear anything.

ABE

I don't see anything.

Ellen checks her phone again.

ELLEN

People seem to think it's real.

A siren blares out, drowning out their surroundings.

ABE

Yeah that's real.

Abe agrees and runs back into the house, Ellen follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Abe rips open the box labeled "CAMPING." He pulls out a couple of water jugs.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Ellen stands in front of the bathtub with her phone to her ear.

ELLEN
Come on, come on, come on...

ABE (O.S.)
I don't hear any running water!

ELLEN
Please...

ABE (O.S.)
Water, El!

ELLEN
I'm trying to get in touch with my family.

ABE (O.S.)
Wah. Ter!

ELLEN
Will you not be such a selfish prick right now?

Abe enters the bathroom, hands full of water jugs.

ABE
Did they answer?

ELLEN
No.

ABE
Then fill up the tub, we'll worry about family later.

He tosses the jugs to Ellen and exits the bathroom.

ELLEN
Easy, easy!

ABE (O.S.)
No time for easy!

Ellen plugs up the bathtub and turns on the water, keeping her phone to her ear as she redials.

ELLEN
Pick up, pick up, pick up...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Abe rips another camping box. He rummages around, looking for anything that could help them survive.

ABE
Where are the ioine tablets?

ELLEN (O.S.)
With the camping shit.

ABE
I don't see 'em.

ELLEN (O.S.)
Look harder.

ABE
Already am, dear.

Ellen comes barging in, phone no longer in her hand. She rips open a box and dumps out the contents. She finds the bottle right away.

ELLEN
Look harder.

She leaves with the bottle.

Abe digs through the contents of the dumped box, grabbing armfuls of protein bars and whatever food he can find.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Sirens continue ringing out in the distance.

Ellen returns to the bathroom to find the tub almost overflowing. Her phone rests on the toilet.

She lifts one of the jugs to take it out. It starts leaking.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Abe's opened a few more boxes. He throws all the food he can find into one of the dumped ones.

ELLEN (O.S.)
You cracked that jug.

ABE
Not my fault you didn't catch it.

ELLEN (O.S.)
Not my fault you threw it so hard.

ABE
Whatever.

ELLEN (O.S.)
Grab me some tape, should be in one
of those boxes in the back.

Abe gets up and runs to the back of the house.

Ellen runs out to the living room.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Where are we gonna ride this out?

ABE
I guess the bathroom? It's the most
interior right?

ELLEN
Yeah that's what I was thinking.
Where's the food?

ABE
In the box there.

Ellen grabs the food and exits.

Down the hall Abe rips open one of Ellen's boxes and starts
digging for tape.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Ellen enters, holding the food box. We still hear Abe in the
other room. She sets down the box and grabs her phone from
the toilet and dials again.

It rings and rings, after the fifth ring, Abe can't be heard.

ELLEN
How's that tape coming?

No answer. She hangs up the phone and pockets it.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Abe?

Still nothing. She exits out the back of the room.

INT. BREAKFAST NOOK - DAY

Ellen enters to find Abe sitting in the center of the room.
He's surrounded by various dumped out on the ground from the
various boxes.

In front of him is an open shoebox filled with assorted photos, letters, and a ring.

ELLEN

Tape tape, come on!

Abe doesn't move. Ellen digs through the larger box and finds a roll of duct tape. She holds it up to Abe.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

See?

Abe sits frozen.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

We gotta get moving. Unless you wanna end up as stains on the wall.

Abe reaches into the shoebox and pulls out a diamond ring—the band inscribed with tiny, foreign looking text.

ABE

What is this?

ELLEN

It's what it looks like.

ABE

Galen?

ELLEN

Yeah so?

ABE

Galen, the leatherworker. Galen, your best friend. Galen, the guy you insisted be one of my groomsmen even though I barely know him. Galen, the guy you're making cute with in all these photos. Galen, the guy who wrote all these letters.

He dumps out the contents of the box onto the ground.

ELLEN

Yeah and...

ABE

I didn't even know you were together

ELLEN

It was a while ago

ABE
Let alone engaged

ELLEN
I called it off, obviously.

ABE
You kept the ring

ELLEN
Now's not the time.

ABE
No, now's definitely the time.
Why'd you keep it, Ellen?

ELLEN
There's a very real chance we're
gonna die in like fifteen minutes.
I don't know about you, but I'd
like for our last moments on earth
to be peaceful.

ABE
I won't feel at peace until I know
why you kept all this shit.

ELLEN
Because he meant something to me.

ABE
Wow.

ELLEN
He meant something to me. You mean
something to me. Okay? It's not
like you haven't dated other
people.

ABE
Yeah, but I don't keep our old
engagement rings lying around.
Engagement rings inscribed with...

He tries to make out the text engraved on the ring.

ABE (CONT'D)
What language even is this?

ELLEN
Elvish.

ABE
Jesus Christ.

ELLEN

I said it was a while ago.

ABE

I can't believe this asshole is gonna be in our wedddding.

ELLEN

If we even live to have a wedding. But here we are bickering in the breakfast nook as we're about to get nuked to bits.

ABE

I already feel nuked to bits.

ELLEN

You are being soooooo fucking dramatic.

Ellen's phone rings. She takes it out of her pocket and looks at it.

ABE

That your mom?

Ellen declines the call.

ELLEN

I'll talk to her later.

ABE

Call her back.

ELLEN

It's fine. Really.

ABE

Why not? It's the end of the world right? Don't you wanna talk to your mom?

He lunges at the phone. Ellen pulls away from him.

ABE (CONT'D)

It's him isn't it.

ELLEN

He's probably just worried.

ABE

Then go to him! Got to him, Ellen.

ELLEN

Shut up.

ABE

Go prance around in the woods with
your heavenly Elf Prince!

ELLEN

Maybe I will!

She kneels down and starts throwing the photos and
letters back in the shoebox.

ABE

He can put on pointy rubber ears
while he fucks you. I bet you'd
looove that.

ELLEN

And I bet you'd looove to bealone
so you can jerk off to your old
bikini photos of Mary Anne right as
the missile hits.

ABE

I don't know what you're...

Ellen gets back to her feet, holding the shoebox.

ELLEN

Oh please, I know about those
polaroids tucked away in your sock
drawer. Don't think I didn't see
them.

ABE

It's not like I was secretly
engaged.

ELLEN

We've both got our past, Abe. I
wouldn't ask you to get rid of
yours, so don't ask me to get rid
of mine.

ABE

I don't want to you to get rid of
it. I just want you to tell me
about it!

ELLEN

It's noe of your goddamn business!

Abe holds up the engagement ring.

ABE
This is none of my goddamn
business? And this?

He yanks the box from Ellen.

ABE (CONT'D)
This is none of my goddamn
business?

ELLEN
Give that back!

ABE
Fuck no!

Abe runs through the back hallway, into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Abe makes a beeline for the closet, picks up the hammer from the floor along the way.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Abe dumps out the floor. He finds the engagement ring and begins to hammer it. Ellen enters and sees what he's doing.

ABE
Die! Die!

ELLEN
Stop it, Just stop it Abe!

Abe keeps whacking away. The ring bounces around, indestructible.

ABE
Why won't you fucking die!

In a fury he throws the ring aside, picks up the water jug and dumps it all over the other items from the shoebox. Ellen puts a hand to her mouth and goes quiet.

On the floor, ink bleeds across the pages of memories. Pictures warp and crinkle.

The water jug is empty. Ellen kneels down and rescues what she can from the puddle.

ELLEN
Get out.

ABE
And get blown up?

ELLEN
Get out!

Ellen pushes him toward the door. Abe pushes back.

ABE
I'm not leaving

ELLEN
Then I am.

Ellen gathers what she can in the shoebox and leaves.

ABE
Ellen wait.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ellen hoists up the mattress and bed frame, barricading the bathroom door. She exits.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Abe opens the door, only to be greeted by their mattress.

ABE
Ellen, come on. Come back.

A low rumble bellows in the distance, fast approaching.

ABE (CONT'D)
Ellen I think it's coming.

The rumbling grows.

ABE (CONT'D)
Ellen!

He gives a final shove at the door, knocking the mattress to the ground. He bursts out of the closet and stumbles over the pieces of bed frame.

INT. BREAKFAST NOOK - CONTINUOUS

The rumbling grows. He runs over and looks to the living room for Ellen. He looks outside and sees Ellen in the back yard kneeling over the photos and letters.

EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Abe runs over and crouches in front of Ellen.

ABE
We need to go.

ELLEN
I'm not going.

Abe sits next to her.

ABE
Fine.

The rumble is deafening. Ellen and Abe put their hands over their ears, huddling next to each other, gripping each other tightly. The rumble subsides. Above military helicopters fly above, crossing the sky until it's just silence.

They exhale, as though emerging from under.

In the distance, they hear a radio.

RADIO (O.S.)
There is no missile threat or
danger to the State of Hawaii.
Repeat. False Alarm.

Ellen and Abe let go of each other as the message repeats in the background.

Ellen unclenches her fists. They've been holding some of the photos and letters, now crinkled and ripped. She sets them down in front of them.

Abe pulls out his phone to find an emergency alert lifting the missile notice.

Ellen pulls out her phone, seeing missed calls from Galen along with the alert.

Abe flattens the photos in front of them. Ellen watches him try to flatten every last one.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Abe sits on the mattress, still on the floor surrounded by the bed frame in parts. He takes a blow dryer to flattened, crinkled photos and letters.

Ellen walks in and kneels behind him with the engagement ring.

ELLEN
Will you marry me?

Abe doesn't respond.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
Will you still marry me?

No response.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
You want me to say it in Elvish?

Abe laughs. He takes the ring from Ellen. He tries to put it on, but it won't fit.

ABE
It's too small.

He hands the ring back to Ellen. She tosses it out and into the living room.

They sit together on the mattress looking at the photos.

Abe picks one up, a selfie of Ellen and Galen. He hands the photo to Ellen. Ellen takes the photo.

ABE (CONT'D)
You look happy here.

ELLEN
I am.

She kisses him and rests her head on his shoulder.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Debris litters the living room. Ripped open boxes, random belongings, the ring. Their lives spread out across the floor.

Appendix 03: Shotlist & Shooting Schedule

Begins next page

[illegible]

700	SETUP 9									
730										
800	Int. Bathroom - Day	9	A	32	W	Eye	Static	Whole scene. Ellen enters puts down food	Sticks	
830	Int. Bathroom - Day	9	B	32	M - Cu	Eye	Static	Start on phone, pan with it when Ellen picks it up	Sticks	
900	Int. Bathroom - Day	9	C	32	W	OTS on door	Static	Ellen calling to Abe, empty frame	sticks	
930	SETUP 10									
1000										
1030	Int. Nook - Day	10	A	17-120	W	Eye	Zoom in with Ellen entering nook	Down back hallway as she enters	sticks	
1100	Int. Nook - Day	10	B	32	W	Eye	Dolly alongside Ellen Entering	Ellen entering, arrive with Abe in center frame while Ellen finds it	dolly	
1130	Int. Nook - Day	10	C	32	W	Eye	Handheld	Master???	easyrig	
1200	Int. Nook - Day	10	D	32	M	OTS	Handheld	Ellen	easyrig	
1230	Int. Nook - Day	10	E	32	M	OTS	Handheld	Abe	easyrig	
100	LUNCH									
130	Int. Nook - Day	10	F	32	M	High	Handheld	Slo mo??? dumping contents	easyrig	
200	Int. Nook - Day	10	G	32	Cu	Eye	Handheld	Phone insert	easyrig	
230	Int. Nook - Day	10	H	32	Cu	Eye	Handheld	Ring insert	easyrig	
300	Int. Nook - Day	10	J	32	M	Low	Handheld	Ellen picking up contents - getting up	easyrig	
330	Int. Nook - Day	10	K	32	Cu	Profile	Handheld	Polaroids to end on Ellen	easyrig	
400	Int. Nook - Day	10	L	32	Cu	Profile	Handheld	Polaroids to end on Abe	easyrig	
430	Int. Nook - Day	10	M	32	M	2-eye-profile	Handheld	Abe taking the box from Ellen and following him out into bedroom into s 12	easyrig	
500										
530										
600										
630										
BUFFER AND PLAN FOR DAY 4										

700	SETUP 11 & 12									
730										
800	Int. Bedroom - Day	11	A	32	W	Eye	followed by Ellen	Running through		easyrig
830										
900	Int. Bathroom - Day	12	A	32	W	OTS Ellen on Abe	handheld	whole scene		easyrig
930	Int. Bathroom - Day	12	B	32	W	OTS Abe on Ellen	handheld	whole scene		easyrig
1000	Int. Bathroom - Day	12	C	32	CU	Low	Handheld	slomo up on Abe hitting it		easyrig
1030	Int. Bathroom - Day	12	D	32	CU	high	handheld	slomo pouring water		easyrig
1100	Int. Bathroom - Day	12	E	32	CU	Eye	handheld	slomo on jug		easyrig
1130	Int. Bathroom - Day	12	F	32	CU	Eye	handheld	Ellen cu get out til end		easyrig
1200	Int. Bathroom - Day	12	G	32	CU	Eye	handheld	Abe CU get out til end		easyrig
1230										
100										
130										
200	Int. Bedroom	13	A	32	W	Eye	handheld	Ellen leaving and barricading door		easyrig
230	Int. Bedroom	13	B	32	M	Eye	handheld	Ellen leaving and barricading door		easyrig
300										
330	Int. Bathroom - Day	14	A	32	M	Eye	handheld	Abe in bathroom		easyrig
400	Int. Bathroom - Day	14	B	32	CU	Eye	handheld	Abe in bathroom		easyrig
430	Int. Bathroom - Day	14/15/16	C	32	M	Eye	handheld	Following Abe through house searching		easyrig
500										
530	Int. Nook - Day	15	A	32	M	Eye	handheld	frontal of Abe entering, looking and		easyrig
600										
630										

700	SETUP 16									
730										
800	Ext. Back yard - i	16	A	32	M	Eye	handheld	frontal Abe coming outside and kneeling.		easyrig
830	Ext. Back yard - i	16	B	32	CU	Eye	handheld	whole scene		easyrig
900	Ext. Back yard - i	16	C	32	CU	Eye	handheld	frontal CU Ellen		easyrig
930	Ext. Back yard - i	16	D	32	CU	Eye	handheld	Abe CU		easyrig
1000	Ext. Back yard - i	16	E	32	CU	Eye	handheld	insert of flattening letters		easyrig
1030	Ext. Back yard - i	16	F	32	CU	Eye	handheld	insert phone		easyrig
1100	Ext. Back yard - i	16	G	32	M	low	sticks	abe and ellen hugging with sky		tripod
1130	Ext. Back yard - i	16		32	M	low OTS of sky	sticks	Plate and hugging		tripod
1200	SETUP 17									
1230	LUNCH									
1300	SETUP 17									
100	Int. Bedroom - Di	17	A	32	W - M	Ground	dolly	slow push in through tossing the ring		dolly
130										
200	Int. Bedroom - Di	17	B	32	M	OTS	sticks	OTS Abe		tripod
230	Int. Bedroom - Di	17	C	32	M	OTS	sticks	OTS Ellen		tripod
300	Int. Bedroom - Di	17	D	32	CU	OTS	sticks	Insert of photo		tripod
330	Int. Bedroom - Di	17	E	32	M	Eye	sticks	Med 2 looking at photo through end		tripod
400	SETUP 18									
430	Int. Bedroom - Di	18	A	32	W	Ground	Sticks	Inserts of debris		tripod
500										
530	WRAP									
600										

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